Notes on Early History of Atwell's Mill
Taken from Tape Recordings of Grace Alles made in 1973
(transcriber unknown)

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My father, Doc Mullenix, homesteaded the Atwell's Mill tract in 1879. He had come to the area as a part of the mineral excitement at Mineral King. It was his intention to cut posts and shingles on the land for the new mining camp and he did this. He did not cut sequoias.

In 1886 my father sold out to Judge Atwell of Visalia, who built a proper, steam-powered saw mill. Like my father, he did not cut sequoia wood, at least form standing trees.

In 1891 the mill was leased to the Kaweah Colony after the death of Judge Atwell. They worked it during that summer (and had trouble with the army).

After the Colony gave up its lease, Henry Alles and a partner of his named Bettencourt bought the tract and took over the mill operation. Between 1889 and about 1903 Henry leased the mill to the Mount Whitney Power Company, which cut sequoia wood to build its flume and powerhouses in Three Rivers.

About 1915 Henry Alles sold the land to the Government, but he was allowed to maintain the mill on that site to cut up down wood. After 1920 Colonel White continued this policy. When Henry dies, the operation of the mill was taken over by his brother, and my husband, Phil Alles.

Finally, about 1937, Col. White told us we would have to move the mill from the park, so with the permission of Wells, we moved up to his land at Silver City. Within several years, Phil sold the mill to the Wells.

My father served as the first ranger at Atwell's Mill for the Park. This was between 1914 and 1917.

The cabin next to the road I lived in for many years was built in 1901 by Hal Moffett. Moffett worked in the mill and he had an invalid daughter he thought would benefit from the climate at Atwell's during the summer. When he was refused permission to build a cabin for his family at the mill, he built one on the road right-of-way, where it stands to this day.

Phil Alles took over the mill in 1920.

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